



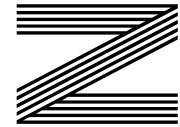
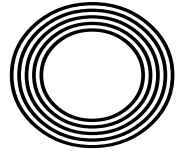
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of the Year 2021

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excuses
**FOR PULLING
A SICKIE**

Remembering a legend
**DAME BARBARA
WINDSOR DBE**

Lewis
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Editor's notes...

JANUARY 2021



Brett Shohet, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** Hornchurch. I don't know how many of you are like me, but every new year I like to jot down my targets for the year ahead and what I'd like to achieve. Looking at my 2021 targets I can see that, owing to the disruption from the 2020 global pandemic, most of them are identical to last year's. Having said that, I certainly wouldn't label 2020 a 'throwaway' year - rather, it was a year for us to slow down and be grateful for what we already have, rather than looking to build on it. I'm pleased to say that, despite this, we did branch out to more areas in Essex and Hertfordshire.

In hindsight, it was an important year, but one I'm glad to have left behind. I can't wait to see friends and family as normal, as well as hold face-to-face meetings for business. I'm looking forward to having that sense of connection back, which was definitely missed last year.

It was a huge source of pride for **VISION** to support businesses through their most difficult points in 2020 - equally, we appreciate the support, trust and belief that our clients showed in us.

I wish everyone a happy new year and, as always, thank you for reading.

Brett Shohet

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At the time of print all content in **VISION** was relevant and up to date according to COVID-19 government guidelines

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The great Dame BARBARA WINDSOR DBE

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF THE QUEEN OF TV

In a troublesome, traumatic year, many saw Dame Barbara Windsor's death in early December 2020 as another profound low.

An only child born in Shoreditch two years before the breakout of World War II, 'Babs' made her West End debut at the age of just 13, in the musical *Love from Judy*.

As the Swinging Sixties swung, so too did Barbara Windsor's buoyant, bubbly, effervescent personality carry forward an industry. From appearances in films *Sparrows Can't Sing* (for which she won a BAFTA), *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *The Boy Friend*, to sitcom work with *The Rag Trade* and *Wild, Wild Women*, her acting talent was as admired as it was, at times, underplayed.

Indeed, when the slapstick comedy of the *Carry On* movies came around, while decorated in her roles, Babs became somewhat pigeonholed.

Nonetheless, she re-emerged in the 1970s to return to stage work with *Oh! What a Lovely War* and *Twelfth Night*, among others.

From high jinks to heavy drama, Babs was an entertainment icon in her own right. Never clichéd, never disrespected, she came to represent an era of British entertainment in which our output rivalled anyone else the world over.

And in accepting the opportunity to take ownership of the Queen Vic pub in Albert Square in 1994, Babs' career reinvention proved a masterstroke. A boisterous, no-nonsense, independent pub landlady, she kept a lid on Walford's most tempestuous characters, and remains the only person in *EastEnders'* 35-year history to have tempered the problematic Mitchell brothers, Grant and Phil – her sons.

Of course, Windsor's infectious persona,

effortless charm and cheeky sex appeal saw her decorated with no shortage of admirers. From relationships with Ronnie Kray and comedy sidekick Sid James, she enjoyed a lively 21-year marriage with nightclub owner Ronnie Knight. The pair shared a luxury home on Stanmore Hill. She later married chef Stephen Hollings and wed a third time in 2000, to Scott Mitchell, bridging an age gap of 27 years. She didn't have any children.

Following her passing, the tributes came from far and wide for an actress whose time in front of the camera was really only a platform to a breath-taking life in showbusiness.

The sadness of her death was calmed somewhat by the fact Babs had been in unsteady health for a number of years. In 2014 she retired from all acting duties when diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Undeterred by the darker clouds that she sensed were about to gather, and ably assisted by her husband, she leapt into a new role of raising both funds and awareness for the disease, and continued to campaign up until her death.

While still seen out frequently over the past few years, the toils of public engagements eventually proved too much for someone who had previously bathed in the decorative sunlight of press and publicity.

Slipping away quietly, as she did on December 10, was perhaps the most inauspicious of conclusions to a booming, bustling life full of big personality. And yet, while we all take away slightly different memories of Barbara Windsor, our collective recollections will surely always be of an actress who spearheaded a golden era of British entertainment, always accompanied by a warm smile and mischievous laugh.

Photo credit: Shutterstock



THE WORLD AROUND US

Part 3

In the third part of our environmental series, we look at the key driver in the health and well-being of the planet. In this issue, it's the air above our heads.

In all the trust we place in environmentalists, activists and those passionate about preserving our planet, perhaps when it comes to air we need to invest the greatest level of trust.

On the ground, the world in which we live seems largely pleasant, and as far as air quality goes, our immediate environment is certainly much cleaner today than at any time since the Industrial Revolution, and noticeably so.

Yet in 2020 we are driven by targets – achieving a net zero greenhouse gas equation and an 80 per cent cut in emissions by 2050 being two of the biggest headline grabbers.

The problem for the preservation of air quality is that industry rolls on. We are a long way from the smoggy days of 1950s London, but air pollution still contributes to almost 10 per cent of premature deaths, while costing around £40 billion each year.

Of course, the enforced lockdown in the spring of 2020 was perhaps the greatest exemplar of

how great our footprint is. Within weeks, scientists reported a 40 per cent drop in air pollutants. It showed that protecting our personal health had a hugely beneficial effect on that of the environment.

And yet, when back at full capacity, even the healthcare systems in England will be responsible for an estimated 4 to 5 per cent of our carbon footprint, with 6.7 billion road miles each year coming from patients and their visitors travelling to NHS hospitals and centres.

Never in starker terms was it clear that the play-off between the health of the planet and the health of the people who inhabit it remains a tug of war we will continue to see.

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FASHION

CARING FOR Cashmere

Cashmere is a winter wardrobe staple for many, providing warmth without weight. That being said, it is not a cheap clothing option, so you need to make sure you show your cashmere a little TLC to prolong its life.

Shave regularly: You may have noticed that your cashmere items are prone to fuzz balls, especially under the arms or where you carry your bag. Known as piling, you can remove these using a razor blade or lint tape.

Don't over wash: Cashmere does not need to be washed every time you wear it. In fact, you should only wash your cashmere clothing a handful of times over the whole winter season. Always wash in cold water – handwashing is best – and use a mild detergent. Softener is not needed as cashmere naturally gets softer over time.

Ignore dry clean only labels: Unless your cashmere item has embellishments such as beading or metals that mean it needs to be dry cleaned, cashmere should not undergo this process as it can damage its fibres.

Lay flat to dry: Cashmere is at its most delicate when wet, so this is the cleaning stage that requires the most amount of care. Simply lay your cashmere item down on a dry towel and carefully roll it up to absorb as much moisture as possible. Never wring it. Then lay it in a shady spot to air dry.

Store away from sunlight: You should store your cashmere items inside out in a dust-free and well-aired area that is away from direct sunlight. Before storing, always ensure that your cashmere is clean and free from dust and dead skin, as these can attract moths. If you are storing your cashmere for the summer, make sure you clean, de-crease and remove any fuzz before putting it away.



BEAUTY

'90s HAIR revival



From Jennifer Aniston's boho beach waves to Victoria Beckham's bob to Winona Ryder's pixie cut, one of the biggest hair trends of 2021 will be the return of hairstyles from the '90s. Think new year, new do.

THE LIVED-IN LOOK

One of the greatest things about the '90s was the effortlessly cool and laid-back style that spread across the nation, in terms of both fashion and haircuts. Spring 2021 will see hairstyles that feel less structured and more lived-in. Whether you go short or long, ask your hairdresser for a natural-looking, low-maintenance cut.

THE BOB

Although the bob has been a strong and unwavering hair trend throughout 2020, next year will see the return of the classic '90s bob. For those with straight hair, opt for a blunt and unstructured bob that is cut to chin level and tucked behind the ear.

THE BOXY CURL

If your hair is naturally curly, then 2021 is all about short and boxy shapes for added bounce. Avoid a straight cut and instead ask for layers and a light fringe. This look is all about texture and volume so you may want to invest in a good-quality volumising spray for added oomph.

THE SUPER-SHORT PIXIE

If you are feeling particularly bold and daring in 2021, you may want to try the super-short pixie cut. Or, if you are ready to take the ultimate plunge, you could even choose a buzz-cut pixie loved by the likes of Kate Hudson and Cara Delevingne.

THE FACE-FRAMING LAYERED LOOK

This look was fairly popular this year but is only set to get stronger in 2021 and beyond. In fact, you won't be able to go five minutes on Instagram without some face-framing plaits popping up on your feed.

Photo credit: Pinterest



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I've never felt more positive or excited for what is to come. As we begin 2021 and move beyond the pandemic, we can't wait to do our bit for Hornchurch. Welcoming new clients and helping the community to smile and feel good again.

With warmest wishes,

Kerry



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Are you READY To Go ~~SOBER~~?

Although January may feel like the worst possible time to try to give up your favourite tittle (isn't this month depressing enough?), you may be surprised at how great you feel after cutting out alcohol for just one month.

What to expect when you give up alcohol...

mark, the effects of not drinking will start to contribute to your long-term health, with benefits including: Improved vision | Better kidney health | A reduction in blood pressure, which can lessen your risk of future health problems, such as heart disease

WEEK ONE

Undeniably the most challenging week in your booze-free month, you may experience some unwanted side effects in the first seven days, such as headaches and intense sugar cravings, especially if you are a heavy drinker. That being said, you will also start to see the positive effects of giving up alcohol, including: Better decision-making | More energy | An improved sleeping pattern

WEEK FOUR

The final week of your no-booze challenge and the effects on your health will be apparent for everyone to see and will include: Better-looking skin | Reduced dandruff and eczema | Up to 15 per cent less fat in your liver

WEEK TWO

After two weeks without alcohol, you will continue to enjoy the health benefits listed above, as well as a few new ones, such as: Reduction in acid reflux as your stomach lining becomes normalised | Weight loss | Better mental health

IS DRY JANUARY WORTH IT?

Although Dry January has become increasingly popular in recent years, is it really worth it in terms of your long-term health if you continue to drink for the other 11 months of the year?

According to Alcohol Change UK, yes it is, with this challenge forcing you to confront how much you drink and to take notice of the harm it can cause.

WEEK THREE

As you are now past the halfway



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MIDDLE OF THE LOAD

Fight the flab after 40 with these steps to prevent midlife weight gain

Cut the calories: Though you may feel as active as ever, your metabolism unfortunately is not as efficient as it once was. However, cutting between 250 and 300 calories per day is enough to keep your weight where you want it to be.

Walk it off: Burning fat only requires a slightly elevated heart rate, which means exercising for a longish period while being slightly out of breath is what you need to aim for. So ditch the gruelling runs and aim instead for a brisk walk or swim.

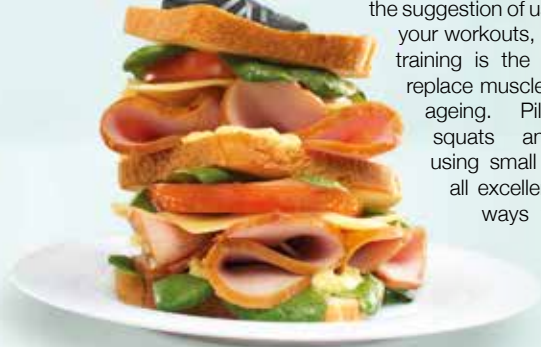
Use your gut instinct: Beat the bloat with healthy bacteria, best found in natural yogurts and fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi and kefir.

Exercise before your eggs: Studies have shown that working out before breakfast can burn up to double the calories – ideal for those who prefer to do their sun salutations as it rises at dawn.

Go nuts: We all know that fruit and vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet, but to maintain blood sugar and control weight you need to be getting plenty of protein too. From a handful of almonds to a bowlful of lentils, or even just a glass of milk, this is one healthy habit you'd be nuts not to try.

Consider HRT: In addition to easing the side effects of the menopause, there is evidence to suggest that hormone replacement therapy can help with weight distribution, which means less fat around the dreaded middle.

Join the resistance: You might balk at the suggestion of using weights in your workouts, yet resistance training is the best way to replace muscle lost through ageing. Pilates, yoga, squats and exercises using small dumbbells are all excellent and enjoyable ways to achieve that toned look.



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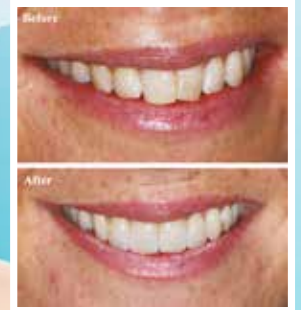
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LET'S STRETCH

Simple daily stretches that will transform both body and mind

Stretching is perhaps one of the simplest actions we make as humans, often without even thinking about it.

While great for suppleness, alertness, injury prevention and a break from long hours in a car or at a desk, it can even work as a weight-loss tool, and will immediately set you en route to daily calorie deficit. Here are five stretches that can transform body and mind:

FOR THE TORSO

The so-called Cobra Stretch is a simple push-up that elevates the torso from a lying start. By extending your top half and raising your neck, chest and head as high as possible, you're creating great elasticity through the body.

FOR THE STOMACH

Many of us have performed this knee-to-chest exercise, which serves the purpose of getting the legs on the move and the knee joints bending (or cracking).

FOR THE SPINE

Twisting the spine to promote flexibility and movement is key, and is done by lying on your side. A good spine twist is great for strengthening the vertebrae, as well as firming up muscle mass around your stomach.

FOR THE BACK

A simple back stretch can make us feel a million dollars, with the energy coming from the middle of the back. Extend the stretch by moving onto tiptoes and pushing your hands and fingers upwards towards the heavens.

FOR THE NECK AND SHOULDERS

And to complete an extremely effective set of manoeuvres, combine neck stretches – which use a hand on the head to gently pull the sides of the neck tight – with a shoulder movement, linking one arm under the other in order to feel a tight, satisfying strain across the back.

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Surprisingly FREEZABLE foods

Whether you are trying to save money, visit the local supermarket less or you are simply fed up with wasting food, you may be surprised to find out just how many different foods you can freeze.

Bananas

A firm favourite in many households, bananas are cheap and cheerful, yet sadly they do not last very long. Luckily, over-ripe and fresh bananas can be frozen, either with or without skin, and used at a later date.

Potatoes

If you buy your potatoes in bulk to save money but you are often left with half a bag of "sprouters", then you will be pleased to hear that you can freeze the humble potato. Simply peel, blanch in boiling water for five minutes, put in a bowl of iced water and leave to cool. Then freeze in airtight bags.

Milk

If you hate waking up in the morning only to realise you've run out of milk, then buying extra and freezing it is the ideal solution. However, milk does expand when frozen, so make sure you decant it into a larger container first. Once defrosted, mix it and consume within three days.

Cheese

You may not want to freeze cheese that you plan to serve with crackers as it can become crumbly. However, cheese cut into chunks or grated, placed in airtight bags and frozen, is perfect for sprinkling on dishes that will be heated, such as lasagne or cauliflower cheese.

Avocados

Avocados are extremely nutritious, yet they can be expensive. Fortunately, if you see them on offer, you can buy several and freeze to consume at a later date. Cut into pieces or mash them before squeezing lemon juice on the flesh to retain colour and placing in resealable bags. Best for use as an ingredient rather than eaten raw as freezing can change the texture.



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GO NUTS!

Not just for pancakes, try using your homemade hazelnut spread in these yummy recipes that the whole family will love.

Hazelnut Hot Chocolate

All you need to create this dangerously addictive hot chocolate is cocoa powder, milk and some hazelnut spread. Simply mix all the ingredients together and pop in the microwave for 2 minutes.

With Shrove Tuesday fast approaching, what better time to discover a new tasty topping for your pancakes?

Check out our own version of a well-known hazelnut cocoa spread which is half the calories, vegan and packed full of healthy fats and vitamins.

Super Healthy Homemade Hazelnut Spread

WHAT YOU NEED:

240g raw hazelnuts | 1½ tbsp pure vanilla extract | ¼ cup cocoa powder | ¼ cup pure maple syrup or unrefined sugar | ¼ tsp salt | ½ cup vegan milk (or normal milk if you do not need a vegan recipe) | 2 tsp oil

HOW TO MAKE:

- > Set oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6
- > Roast hazelnuts for 6–8 minutes
- > Leave to cool slightly and then rub off skins
- > Blend the nuts in a food processor until they are the consistency of butter
- > Add all the other ingredients and blend until smooth

Caramel Cream Nutty Chocolate Lollies

The perfect little treat for tiny hands, simply dissolve 70g of hazelnut spread in a pan over boiling water and set aside half. Pour a thin layer into small, round silicone moulds and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Take out and place a hazelnut-sized piece of salted caramel cream in each mould and cover with remaining spread. Place a lolly stick in each and refrigerate for a further 5 hours.

Nutty Iced Biscuits or Cake

If you are bored with your usual icing, why not use some hazelnut spread instead? Just warm some of the nutty mixture in the microwave for 10–20 seconds and then gently spread over biscuits or cakes. It makes a great cake filler too.



FOOD & DRINK

Are you addicted to SUGAR?

Did you know that adults are advised to have no more than 30g of free sugars per day (the equivalent of seven cubes)? To put that into perspective, a single can of Coca-Cola has 35g of sugar, 5g more than your total allowance for the day. So, are you addicted to sugar? Let's find out.

AM I ADDICTED TO SUGAR?

If you are worried about your sugar consumption or you think you may be addicted to the white stuff, then you should look out for the following most common sugar addiction symptoms:

- Headaches
- Feeling tired or lethargic
- Intense sugar cravings
- Muscle pain
- Nausea
- Bloating

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BREAK A SUGAR ADDICTION?

You will be pleased to hear that you can break a sugar addiction in as little as 10 days. This is because the more sugar you eat, the more you crave it. However, once you stop, or cut back, you will find you want it less and less each day.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GIVING UP SUGAR?

There are many health benefits to giving up sugar, including:

- Increased energy levels
- Better ability to focus
- Enhanced mood
- Decreased inflammation
- Less stomach fat
- Better-looking skin
- Less risk of tooth decay
- Weight loss

TOP TIPS TO HELP STOP CRAVINGS AND SATISFY YOUR SWEET TOOTH...

Going cold turkey when trying to give up free sugars (sugars that are added to food, rather than naturally occurring) can be a challenge.

Fortunately, there are ways to make the process easier:

- Eat three meals and two healthy snacks a day
- Go for a run or a brisk walk
- Eat fruit in the morning on an empty stomach
- Focus on protein at every meal
- Try a fibre- and protein-rich chia seed pudding
- Chew sugar-free gum



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TRAVEL

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QUIRKY OVERNIGHT STAYS TO ENJOY IN THE UK

BOATHOUSES

Not quite boasting the seclusion of a desert island, a number of former boathouses and pumping rooms have, however, been converted into cool little overnight abodes. The Whitby Boathouse, sleeping two, features a narrow bridge separating guests from the not-so-distant 'mainland'.

BUSES

With original features such as iconic winding stairs, original seats and even the steering wheel handily in place in what is now a downstairs bathroom, converted double-decker buses give travel fanatics the ultimate experience... just don't expect it to stick to the timetable (not that it ever did).

PLANES

Fancy the thrill of flight without the faff of the airport? Look no further than The Jet Star. Tucked away in Redberth, Pembrokeshire, this little-known Welsh wonder was originally a first-class private plane from the 1970s. Grounded, it now sleeps up to four people – you don't even need to remember your passport.

FIELDS

Wherever you wish to roam in the British countryside, you are sure to be within reach of a traditional shepherd's hut. Originally an essential place for farmhands to seek refuge from inclement weather, the advent of the Airbnb revolution has seen them transformed into cosy and sometimes luxurious boltholes – the ideal way to bask in the beauty of nature without having to pitch a tent.

TRAINS

Finally, for train fanatics, how about staying in a converted restaurant carriage? Rather than slumming it on bumpy rails, this static wagon, positioned overlooking the Rother Valley Railway in Kent, provides more room than you'd expect, and dates right the way back to use during the Second World War.

Photo credit: welovewhitby.com, coolstays.com, applecampin.co.uk, coolcamping.com, railwayretreats.co.uk



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Isn't it funny,
how a bear
likes honey?



On January 18, 1882, A. A. Milne, the creator of Winnie the Pooh, a character cherished by children and adults alike, was born. To celebrate this skilled storyteller, January 18 has become known as National Winnie the Pooh Day.

As well as being fun to read, these iconic stories offer some important life lessons that resonate just as well today as they did back then.

"What day is it?" said Pooh. "It's today," said Piglet. "My favourite day", responded Pooh.

As well as teaching the importance of seizing the day, this sweet correspondence between Pooh and Piglet helps to promote resilience and encourages children to put aside their fears and do things anyway.



"Hallo!" said Tigger. "I've found somebody just like me. I thought I was the only one of them."

When children are as young as two, they start to notice that people are different, so it is important that they learn to recognise and celebrate these differences, both in themselves and in others.

"A little consideration, a little thought for others, makes all the difference." (Eeyore)

Although known for being gloomy and depressed, Eeyore does sometimes give out little nuggets of wisdom, such as the advice above. Emotional literacy is crucial in your child's development and this life lesson teaches them the importance of being kind to others.



"Pooh!" whispered Piglet. "Yes, Piglet?" "Nothing," said Piglet. "I just wanted to be sure of you."

A life lesson that most adults today could benefit from, the act of being present in your children's lives, away from the distraction of work and technology, is sometimes all they need to feel loved and connected to you.



KIDS

Photo credit: carwalker/Shutterstock.com

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NATIONAL PULL A SICKIE DAY ON



According to UK statistics, the first Monday of February is the day when employees are most likely to pull a sickie. Although excuses may be limited this time round, that doesn't mean we can't take a look at some of the more inventive reasons that people have come up with over the years. You can't make this stuff up!

"My only pair of work trousers is in the wash"

Not the best excuse, as what would you do if your employer simply told you to come in your casual clothes?

"It's my dog's birthday and I need to arrange a party for him"

Even though we are a nation of pet lovers, we can't see too many bosses accepting this far-fetched fabrication.

"My grandmother poisoned me with her ham"

Yes, somebody really did use this as a reason why they hadn't turned up for work. Although, to be honest, this might just be crazy enough to actually work.

"I'm too drunk to drive"

Although this may actually be true, we are not sure that this reason would go down too well with HR.

"I can't come in today, the show I've been watching just released a new series"

Another truthful explanation, and to be fair, we've all been there. Damn you, Netflix!

How you should call in sick to work

- > Contact your employer as soon as possible
- > Keep your reason brief
- > Be as helpful as possible
- > Make sure you speak to the right person
- > If you are struggling with your mental health, be honest and say so, but you are not required to go into details
- > Only text if your employer has previously okayed this method of calling in sick
- > Consider remote working if you feel able to





Grey DAY?

Revealing Pantone's Colours of the Year, Ultimate Gray and Illuminating

Across a year that offered so much but delivered so little, it's perhaps apt that Pantone has selected not one, but two Colours of the Year. Combined, they reflect the trials and tribulations of 12 months that have seen the very fabric of our lives ripped from under us; and yet we emerge energised, enthused and even perhaps enriched.

Pantone has chosen a combination of shades to represent these feelings. Yes, Ultimate Gray (17-5104), at first glance, appears stern, solemn and even echoes back to the styles and sensibilities of the 1980s. And yet, look closer, and it provides solidity and fortitude.

Now combine those emotions with Pantone's second Colour of the Year for 2021 – Illuminating (13-0647). At first a yellow that resonates with cheerful, sparky, spring-like abandon, it offers light, vivacity and thoughts of energy.

As a single shade, Illuminating works, but combined with Ultimate Gray the end effect is, in Pantone's own words, "A story of colour that encapsulates deeper feelings of thoughtfulness with the promise of something sunny and friendly."

It is indeed a combination that can reignite your interiors – consider a statement piece such as a grey sofa, with yellow scattered cushions. Or what about an existing white or wooden room patterned with a grey rug and yellow feature wall?

Grey and yellow, together or alone, will combine with almost any colours. There is a chic harmony that blends as much as it stands out – even in the bedroom, yellow curtains can offer a feeling of light on the drabbest of days; while grey walls, white skirting boards and yellow pictures present a classy combination.

In summing up, expect the Pantone Colour(s) of the Year, Ultimate Gray and Illuminating, to drop into your consciousness, guiding you to happier and more optimistic times in the weeks and months ahead.

Photo credit: designer.com, designbank.com



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BIG ENERGY SAVING WEEK...

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- SWITCH
- SAVE

JANUARY 18 - 24

What better time to try to reduce your energy bills than in the week before payday when you are undoubtedly feeling the pinch after Christmas?

Plus, you don't even have to make massive changes to your lifestyle to enjoy significant savings. Remember, all the little things really do add up.

1. Use your microwave more: Using your microwave is one of the most efficient ways to both heat up and cook food.

2. Be water-conscious: Whether you are making a cup of tea or boiling food in a pan, only use the amount of water that you need.

3. Slow cook your family meals: Cooking in a slow



cooker over a whole day only uses the same amount of energy as a lightbulb.

4. Don't use metal trays in the oven: Glass and ceramic dishes retain heat better than metal ones, making them more energy efficient.

5. Keep heating rings clean: Any food that has become stuck to your heating rings will absorb heat, making them less efficient.

6. Wash your clothes at 30°C: 90 per cent of your washing expenditure is spent on heating the water, so by reducing the heat to 30°C when possible, you can save one-third on your washing costs.

7. Unplug any unused appliances: Unplug or switch the power off on any appliances that you aren't using. This includes charger cables.

8. Turn down your thermostat: By turning down your thermostat by just 1°C, you can save up to £80 per year.

9. Use halogen lightbulbs outside: Halogen bulbs use a quarter less electricity than incandescent bulbs without affecting their brightness, so are ideal for exterior lighting.

10. Defrost food overnight: Defrosting food typically halves the cooking time, meaning less energy used per meal.

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Viva

DRIED FLOWERS

If there is only one interior design trend that you embrace this year, make it the revival of dried flowers. Cost effective, eco-friendly and, most importantly, Pinterest-approved, anyone can dry flowers and arrange a beautiful bouquet to be proudly displayed in their home.

HOW TO DRY FLOWERS

If you want to prolong the life of a bouquet of flowers that has been gifted to you, then drying it out is the perfect solution.

1. Strip off any excess foliage and cut stems to desired length
2. Find a dark and dry area, such as an unused cupboard, and hang your flowers upside down using unflavoured dental floss or string
3. Leave for 2-3 weeks until completely dry
4. Take down and spray with unscented hairspray

WHAT ARE THE BEST FLOWERS FOR DRYING?

If you are new to the flower-drying business, you may want a few ideas to get you started. The below flowers are ideal for drying, although you can dry any varieties: Pansies • Amaranthus • Artemisia • Lavender • Hydrangea • Yarrow • Eucalyptus (although not strictly a flower, this will add lovely greenery to your bouquet)

HOW TO DISPLAY DRIED FLOWERS

Once you have dried your flowers, it is time to carefully arrange them into a delightful display. Below are four different arrangements for you to try out:

- Hanging bunches – tie a few bunches together using twine and hang upside down from a branch or an interior wall
- Wreaths – create a dried flower wreath to hang on your front door
- Mini bouquets – dried posy bouquets look lovely placed in a small vase or as a gift
- Statement displays – if you are looking to create a big and bold display, tie together dried flowers, herbs, leaves and grass. Hang over your dining table for maximum effect.



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HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE PLASTER EFFECT INTERIOR TREND

Lockdown saw a lot of us going back to basics, rediscovering at the same time simpler, less-complicated ways of life.

It seems that in the throes of one of the biggest cultural resets we've ever known, the lure of stripping back has extended right the way through to our interiors, with plaster effect a new design trend that relies very much on the simplicity of old.

The concept is clear – a modern, mottled, moulded, matt-effect plaster wall that looks like, feels like and responds to a stripped-back feeling of style and detail.

It uses, first and foremost, a base of plaster. For the fully organic effect, you can leave it as is, but

many are embracing the idea of using chalk paint, old rags and a natural sponge to

treat, detail and add depth-driven colour to the walls.

The intention is to go rustic and to promote that unfinished look, and less is most definitely more where this is concerned, with over-decoration making the look too perfect and too polished.

A certain generation will shudder as they make comparisons to Artex, but this is a whole world away, and treated properly, even the very rawest exposed plaster can thrive as a brilliant feature.

And if paint and sponges aren't your thing, you can purchase plaster-effect wallpaper, to deliver devastating design dynamism to your walls with a simple splash of a bit of paste.

Whichever way you go about it, the end effect is something that's detailed, bright, totally unique and great for promoting space and feelings of clarity. You'll also find your walls are incredible durable, as the look can be maintained simply with the use of warm, soapy water.

Photo credit: Annie Sloan via homesandgardens.com, George Home via goodhomesmagazine.com, Matalan via goodhomesmagazine.com



SPICY STORAGE SOLUTIONS



Who says that kitchen storage has to be boring? Check out these super stylish and space-saving storage solutions for your spices that will guarantee you reach for some added flavour every time you cook.

TEST IT OUT

If you have a handful of trusty spices that you use regularly, then this is the spice storage solution for you. Simply purchase a set of test tubes, fill with your preferred seasonings and place in a wooden box that you could make yourself or pick up from your nearest craft shop.

STACK IT, STACK IT

For those who want a practical and attractive option, why not store your spices in mini mason jars or tins that have been labelled using chalk paint? Perfect if you love the shabby chic look. These can be stacked on your worktop or stored in a drawer.

MAGNET MAYHEM

If you want your spices within grabbing distance but you don't want them taking up valuable space on your kitchen worktop, try using magnets. You could attach metal spice pots to the inside of your cabinet doors, under your cabinets or in any other convenient location in your kitchen.

TIC TAC ON-THE-GO

Ideal for taking spices outside your home, whether on holiday or into work. Simply pour your favourite spices into old Tic Tac containers, label and you are good to go. Make sure you thoroughly clean the containers first to avoid a minty taste on all your spices.

HANG IN THERE

For another great way to utilise space underneath your kitchen cabinets, simply hang your spice jars directly on the wall using some small hooks and string. Glass storage jars work best for this so that you can easily see what spices are in each container.

Photo credit: littlabelco.com, seattlesundries.com, experthometips.com



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SQUEAKY SCREEN

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However, screen cleaning doesn't have to be so stressful.

TV SCREENS LCD PLASMA

These delicate screens should never be wet cleaned; instead, you should dust them with a soft, dry microfibre cloth. For stubborn smudges, use a pre-moistened wipe that is specifically designed for use on electronics. Make sure you don't miss the dust caught in the vents at the back of your TV.

MOBILE PHONE SCREENS

The screen of your mobile phone can get very dirty so it is important to clean it regularly. Start by removing your phone from its case, powering it down and then polishing it with a microfibre cloth. Rub gently with a wipe that is safe for use on electronics – for example, Lysol – to remove any germs and leave to air dry. Polish again using your cloth. It can also be

a good idea to polish and wipe down your phone case before reattaching.

COMPUTER MONITOR SCREEN

For general cleaning, use a soft, lint-free cloth to remove dust from your computer screen. To remove stains, slightly dampen your cloth or a sponge and softly rub the screen, making sure no excess liquid gets on it. Leave to naturally air dry. Avoid using alcohol or an ammonia-based cleaner on your laptop screen as this can damage it.

What **NOT** to do when cleaning any screen

- > Use aerosol sprays or solvents
- > Spray liquid directly onto the screen
- > Use your fingernail to scratch off stubborn stains

NATURAL CLEANING SOLUTION FOR SCREENS

If you prefer to make your own natural cleaning solutions, this DIY spray is suitable for most screens. Simply mix equal parts vinegar and water, dab your microfibre cloth into the liquid and gently wipe the screen.



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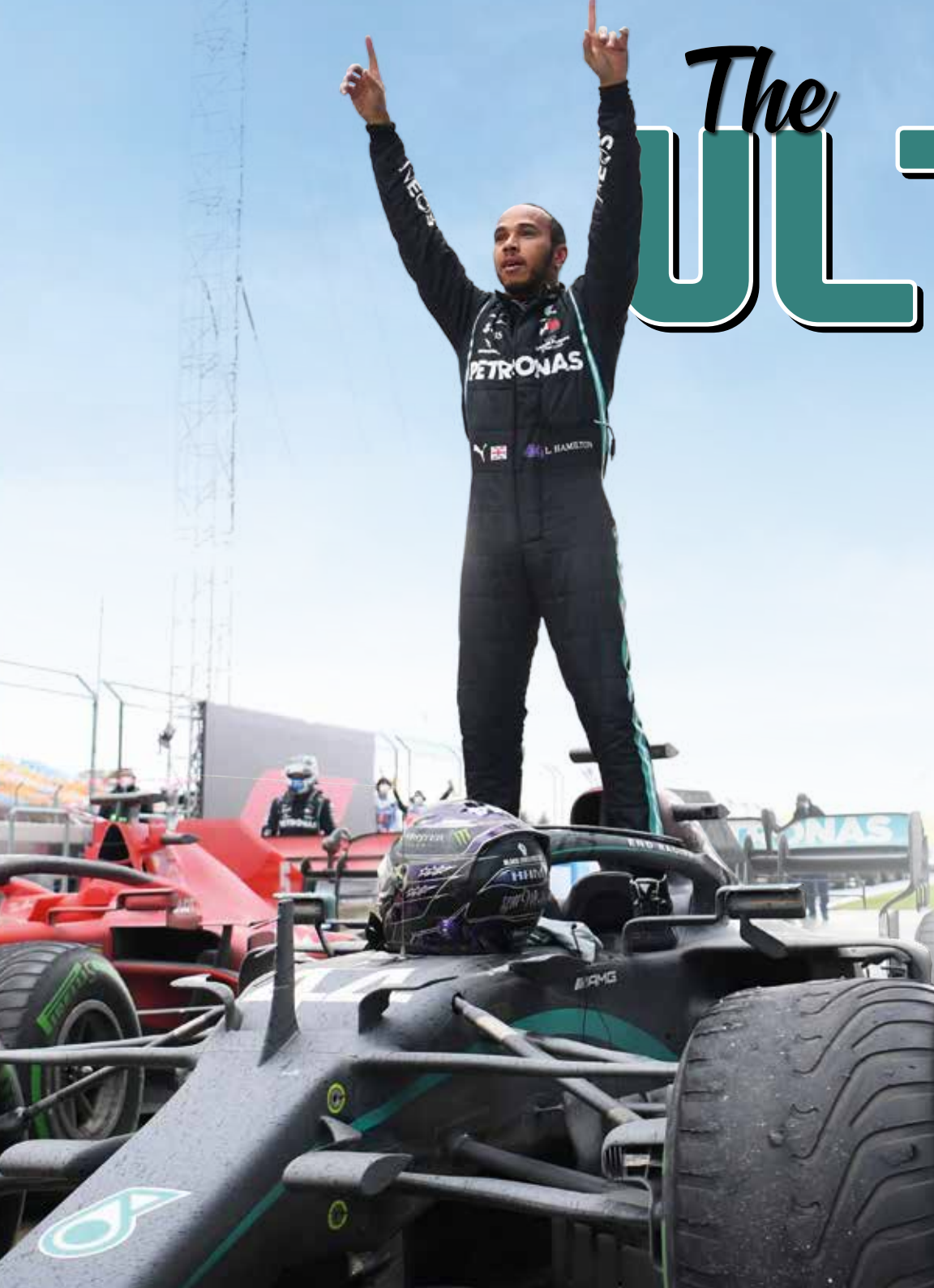
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The ULTIMATE formula

Lewis Hamilton's ascent to being the greatest F1 driver of all time

It's fair to speculate that Lewis Hamilton polarises opinion, even in the midst of being unveiled as the greatest ever Formula One racer.

His victory at the Turkish Grand Prix in the middle of November ensured the Stevenage-born speedster equalled Michael Schumacher's record of seven Drivers' Championships, having already surpassed the German's race victory total in October, in another season of unparalleled dominance. By the close of the campaign in Abu Dhabi on December 13, 2020, Hamilton's points tally was 347, a colossal 123 ahead of closest rival Valtteri Bottas.

The champ said: "To all the kids out there, dream the impossible. Seven is just unimaginable, but when you work with such a great group of people and you really trust each other, there is just no end to what you can do together. I feel like I'm only just getting started; it's really weird."

He may just be correct in that statement. At 35, the Mercedes driver has time on his side – the great Luigi Fagioli was 53 when he scored his final race win at the 1951 French Grand Prix.

Certainly, it's becoming difficult to remember a time when Hamilton's grit, speed and desire wasn't present in the sport. Many believe he truly announced himself at the British Grand Prix in 2008, driving for McLaren. Although he'd already clocked up six victories, dating back to Canada a year previously, his mastery of brutally wet driving conditions to win by more than a minute after starting fourth on the grid set a precedent where he was regarded as the driver to beat.

The world title duly arrived later that year in spectacular fashion, as on the final corner of the final lap in the final race, in Brazil, he overtook Timo Glock to snatch victory from the gearbox of defeat.

After switching to Mercedes in 2014, following a fallow period, Hamilton's synchronicity with the technicians and mechanics accelerated success beyond all expectations, failing just once, in 2016, as Nico Rosberg pipped him to title glory by just five points. The German realised he would most likely never repeat that feat, and promptly retired from the sport, never to be seen again.

Wind forward, and even finding himself struck down with COVID-19 at the start of December was not to dampen the determination and drive of Hamilton, a man who now looks towards new heights, the first of which will be making up the handful of race wins required to get to that magic total of 100.

As far as being the sport's 'Marmite man', perhaps it's Hamilton's £40million annual salary; perhaps it's envy at the showbiz lifestyle he has garnered for himself from somewhat simple beginnings; perhaps it's a generic perception across the sport that racers are only as good as the cars they ride in.

In reality, Hamilton gives short shrift to the detractors. He will discuss his knighthood, announced as part of the New Year Honours; he'll reference all those times he's arrowed across the finish line in first position; he'll note the 84 occasions he's started on the front of the grid; and, of course those seven titles. And he'll point to the fact that he is, truly, the greatest ever.



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Niece lends a hand to aunt after MND diagnosis

The family of a woman from Hornchurch who has been diagnosed with motor neurone disease has completed a charity relay and raised more than £11,000 to adapt her house to suit her medical needs.

After Jayne Ambrose was diagnosed last summer, her niece Louise Skedd was determined to do something to help.

Recently, she led an intrepid team of cyclists and runners from her home in Gainsford End the 40-mile distance to Jayne's home in East London, smashing her original target by more than £4,000.

Louise set up a GoFundMe page where she updated supporters after the event. She revealed the event was completed when Jayne's grandson Elijah crossed

the ribbon and passed the baton to his grandmother. Louise thanked her supporters on the page.

She wrote: "From the many incredibly generous donations, the words of support, the people out on the street cheering and of course the amazing team of runners and riders, who took part to make the Relay for Jayne such a success.

"Not only have you made a huge financial difference to my auntie and uncle's life going forward but you have shown her just how much compassion there is for her situation and more importantly how loved she is."

If you would like to donate visit fr.gofundme.com/f/jayne-ambrose039s-battle-with-motor-neurone-disease



Photo credit: Sean Walsh Photography

Urchins return to action with victory in FA Trophy

Hornchurch's long-awaited return to competitive football was met with a bang after they cruised to victory in the FA Trophy First Round Proper at home against Wingate & Finchley FC.

Their last game before the second national lockdown ended in a disappointing 2-1 defeat in the league against Folkestone, with a last-minute winner leaving a sinking feeling at the club. However, a convincing 4-1 victory was the best way to kick things off again.

Ollie Muldoon opened the scoring for the Urchins inside 15 minutes with a curling effort, but they were pegged back almost instantly in what was an eventful first half at Hornchurch Stadium.

Charlie Ruff ensured the home side went in ahead at the break, before they really turned on the style in the

second half with goals from Sam Higgins and Liam Nash to cement their place in the second round of the FA Trophy.

There was a departure in December, though, with Nathan Cooper (pictured) committing his future to National League South side Hemel Hempstead Town after impressing on a dual-registration basis. He has now committed to them full-time.

He made 187 appearances for the Urchins since his debut in 2015 and was voted as the Players' Player of the Season and the Supporters' Player of the Season during the 2017/18 campaign.

A spokesperson for the club said: "We would like to thank Nathan for his time at the club and wish him the very best of luck for the future."

Sadness as bank closes its doors for good

People in Gidea Park have expressed their sadness after the last bank in the area closed for business permanently recently.

Councillor Judith Holt spoke out after the closure of the Lloyds branch on Main Road.

She said: "Although much is now carried out online, I do think there should still be the face-to-face service available. There is now no longer any outside cashpoint in Gidea Park. I wonder if any local business in Balgores Lane/Main Road might consider installing one?"

Cllr Holt said the area had lost four banks in the last 20 years, including the nearby branch of Barclays which closed during the first lockdown.

The building was the original site of the home of Humphry Repton, the last great English landscape designer, which is denoted by a blue plaque. It is unclear what will happen to it in the future.



Photo credit: Judith Holt



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Images issued of pair sought following assault

Police investigating an assault in Hornchurch have released images of a man and a woman they want to speak to in connection with the incident.

At approximately 9.30pm on Monday, May 25, 2020, a man and a woman attended a residential address near Roneo Corner, Hornchurch, and tried to enter the premises.

The woman was armed with a baseball bat and, in an attempt to get into the block, she began to smash the glass door with the bat.

The victim went outside to see what was happening and asked the pair to leave, as the person they said they were looking for did not live there.

The man and woman then became aggressive and

began to attack him.

The victim – who did not know his attackers – sustained minor injuries to the upper body.

PC Mark McNulty of the East Area BCU, who is investigating, said: "I am very keen to speak to anyone who can provide information concerning the identity of the man and the woman shown in the images.

"I would urge anyone that can name the two individuals to contact the police immediately."

Anyone with information should call police on 101, email, or Tweet @MetCC quoting reference CAD 9524/25MAY20.

To remain 100 per cent anonymous, please call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Isabella wins Young Artist of the Year Award

A former Havering Sixth Form student is celebrating after she won first place in the Havering Young Artist of the Year Award 2020 for Key Stage 5.

Isabella Pavitt's artwork, which caught the eye of the panel of judges, was a screen print on fabric titled 'Language Reconstructed'.

Owing to the virus, the 2020 competition, run by Frances Bardsley's The Appleby Gallery, was a virtual one with work judged from photographs. The Mayor of Havering, councillor John Mylod, who said he was extremely impressed with the talent on show, announced the winners in a virtual presentation via YouTube.

Isabella won an artist pack.

She said: "I was so pleased to have won and want to say thank you to my tutors at the sixth form. I want to express my gratitude for all the support I received during college art classes that helped me to reach this achievement – I am truly grateful."





JULIA LOPEZ MP

Hornchurch and Upminster



I recently volunteered with Hornchurch charity Tapestry, to highlight its new food delivery service for vulnerable and elderly people in Havering. Delivering fish and chips to residents across the constituency, I wanted to draw attention to Tapestry's work to reduce isolation and get hot meals to those who may be seeing less of people over winter because of the pandemic.

Tapestry stepped up its volunteering programme over the Christmas period, trying to identify and contact those not currently known to them who might be at risk of mental and physical deterioration, including those leaving hospital or families who might be affected by the financial impact of COVID-19.

Volunteering for Tapestry is really simple and straightforward – if you have a car and a spare hour or more, it is a great way to contribute to the collective community effort to get us through this difficult time. I encourage anyone who wants to help their immediate community to sign up and get involved by emailing hello@tapestry-uk.org or telephoning 01708 796600.

I also caught up with our Borough Police Commander, Stephen Clayman, to discuss residents' concerns regarding crime and to get an update on policing within Havering, particularly in relation to the Ardleigh Green campus of Havering College. Stephen was confident that targeted measures in and around the campus to deal with violence and antisocial behaviour will have an impact, but we shall be keeping an eye on this. Work is underway with Essex Police, via Operation Gambler, to tackle vehicle thefts, and I know this is delivering results. With local police recruitment increasing, I was pleased to hear that the first intake of Met Police apprentices will be joining our BCU in January. Finally, I raised concerns regarding domestic abuse, missing persons, and the abuse faced by shop workers in Havering and am pleased that work is ongoing in all of these areas.

I was pleased that, following discussions with Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, the government has agreed a package of financial support to Transport for London (TfL) for the final phase of Crossrail, allowing work to continue at pace.



I have weekly to fortnightly calls with our local hospital trust to understand the local picture in managing the pandemic, and that has included keeping up to date with testing and vaccine roll-out efforts.

Finally, last month I hosted my first Virtual Apprenticeships Fair, showcasing exciting opportunities within the Department for Work and Pensions. Apprenticeships are not just for young people seeking work but are for anyone who is seeking to retrain and enter a new career path, regardless of their age. I have posted updates on my website and urge anyone who is interested in these schemes to take a look. This was the second in my online jobs events and my team will be carrying out further events to highlight opportunities as we go into this year.

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LOCAL NEWS

ANDREW ROSINDELL



MP for ROMFORD

We began 2020 filled with hope and optimism for a new decade. After a politically tumultuous 2019, our nation looked forward to a period of calm, as we finally extracted ourselves from the clutches of the European Union.

Tragically, by the beginning of March, it became clear that the year ahead would be far more difficult than we had all hoped.

It has been tough and very sad, but the British people are resilient and are made of strong stuff.

Despite the cruel coronavirus, plus many others facing medical concerns owing to delayed operations, missed cancer screenings and mental health issues, not to mention the economy taking a downward turn worse than anything we have faced for centuries, I believe there is much to look forward to in 2021.

With the vaccine being rolled out, I remain truly

optimistic about our future. The British people have the spirit, the tenacity and the grit to get through these difficult economic times.

We can also breathe a sigh of relief that, at last, we have completely cut ourselves free from Brussels, which is what the vast majority of us in Havering voted for.

So, let this coming year be one for recovery and renewal. It will take time to restore what we have lost, but with patience and perseverance, better times will come.

We must now focus on getting our economy moving again, and I urge everyone in Romford, Hornchurch and throughout Havering to support their local shops and businesses. Now more than ever, they need our support.

May I wish all the readers of **VISION**Hornchurch a much happier 2021 for us all.

New CCTV cameras installed



New CCTV cameras have been placed in Hornchurch in a direct response to an appeal from residents and businesses to clamp down on antisocial behaviour.

Action was taken by Havering Council to install the cameras at the junction of Ardleigh Green Road and Squirrels Heath Lane following a meeting.

The cameras will be in place for 16 weeks to help prevent further antisocial behaviour.

Nearly 180 people dialled into a virtual meeting recently to receive an update on the actions being taken to address some of the issues that have occurred in the area in recent weeks.

The meeting was attended by Havering Council Leader councillor Damian White, Andrew Rosindell, MP for Romford, the police, college, councillors and council staff.

A number of issues were discussed, including a serious incident at the college, security and the roles of the police and college.

Cllr White said he was overwhelmed and delighted by the community's response to the meeting.

He said: "We take all incidents of antisocial behaviour seriously and have been supporting the work being done by the college in numerous ways. We are confident that the action that has already been taken has seen the number of incidents reduce considerably. However, residents and businesses told us they would feel safer with CCTV in place."

During the meeting, the principal Paul Wakeling outlined a number of steps that the college is taking to remedy the situation, such as introducing extra transport, reminding pupils about social distancing, wearing masks and stepping up its security.



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LOCAL NEWS

College commended for mental health support during lockdown

Support for students at New City College (NCC), which includes the Havering Colleges in Hornchurch, has been nationally recognised.

The college has reached Association of Colleges' Beacon Standard and Commended Status in recognition of its highly effective and innovative response to the increased anxiety, mental and well-being issues of students, staff and the wider community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The college provided a network of support to those hardest hit by the pandemic.

Its response included the establishment of a £200,000 NCC Hope Fund to provide extra financial

support to those facing financial difficulty owing to the pandemic, the quick adaptation of the college's award-winning mental health professionals to respond to an increase in demand, and extending college professional counselling support to partner NHS staff.

New City College Group principal and CEO Gerry McDonald said: "We are delighted that our work to support students in their learning and beyond at such a challenging time has been recognised with a national commendation. I am proud of how our staff quickly and proactively responded to the impacts of lockdown, to adapt and increase support for students and their families."

Salon marks 25 years of cuts and blow-dries

A hairdressing salon in Hornchurch celebrated its 25th anniversary in style recently.

Kerry Larcher, 46, is the owner of The Vanilla Room and grew the business from her childhood passion for hairdressing. Kerry opened The Vanilla Room's first salon on North Street in 1995 aged just 21.

Since then, the salon has cut more than half a million heads of hair, painted more than one million highlights and styled more than 4,000 brides and prom princesses. It has also trained some of the best new hairdressing talent through its Hair Camp Academy, raised thousands of pounds for charities and won many awards.

Kerry told VISIONHornchurch about her proudest achievement.

She said: "It's the relationships we've built with

clients and team members through the decades, and the reputation we have for kindness, professionalism and incredible hair."

The past six months have presented Kerry and her team with the toughest challenges yet. However, the business has invested more than £20,000 in a COVID-19-safe renovation and implementation of new processes.

Kerry said: "I've never felt more positive or excited for what is to come. Thank you to our Hornchurch community for an incredible quarter of a century. I feel proud to be a family business, providing a safe service and creating quality jobs for local people."

The Vanilla Room employs 46 people and serves more than 450 clients every week. In 2005, it moved to its flagship location on Hornchurch High Street.

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News from

Councillor Paul Middleton

St Andrews Ward, Hornchurch Residents' Association



Happy New Year to all. 2020 was an unusual affair. The recent announcement that the vaccination to counter the COVID-19 virus was ready to roll out from early December is a heart-warming item. I hope the government will organise the distribution and control well.

I hold my breath as I wait to hear what the take-up percentage of the vaccination is, and I really hope that there are no horror stories out there.

We enter January full of hope. Will the relaxation of the restrictions over Christmas mean that the 'R' number is growing quickly? Let's hope not.

The local shops and restaurants in Hornchurch need your help now. Many have been shut for extended periods or had their sales curtailed. Please consider shopping locally for everything you can. I understand that it is easier to order online and get something delivered. However, without your support many of the local shops, pubs, restaurants, etc are unlikely to survive.

Hornchurch and Upminster lost their free parking

(in council car parks) more than a year ago. This has negatively impacted the footfall in Hornchurch, and I would imagine this has also had a similar effect on the local traders' profits. COVID-19 has only compounded that problem.

I had a question lodged for discussion for the November 'Full Council', when 54 councillors in Havering meet up (currently on Zoom). The question I raised was asking for not just the return of the free 30 minutes, but for a full one hour free parking in the car parks to assist the traders and encourage the use of the car parks.

The 'Full Council' meeting was delayed until late December. Who knows – I might have some positive news for next month?

It is that time of the year again. If you see potholes, non-working street lamps or water not draining off the roads, please contact your local councillor with the details.

May 2021 be a much better year for all.



LOCAL NEWS



Schoolchildren raise hundreds

Selfless pupils at a school in Hornchurch have been praised for their fundraising.

Despite spending half the year at home, children at Harrow Lodge Primary School have still managed to raise funds for Save the Children, Macmillan, Young Minds, Children in Need and BookTrust, to mention but a few.

Last term, they donated Christmas presents for

needy children in their own school community and Christmas Dinner Hampers. Harrow Lodge children also raised money for the King George and Queen's Hospital charity fund, which gives Christmas presents to children who have to spend the period in hospital.

Headteacher Lynette Searle said: "In total, they raised £332.30 despite three year groups isolating at home."



School invites locals to get on the Christmas Trail

Christmas started early in Hornchurch last month after Ardleigh Green School's Parents Association invited the community on its Christmas Trail.

Locals were invited to pull on their Christmas jumpers and Santa hats and stroll or cycle around the streets of Ardleigh Green looking for clues to complete a special Christmas message. Around 150 people bought maps to take part.

There were also prizes to win in the Trail draw, including two Fortnum and Masons hampers courtesy of Hunters Estate Agents, who sponsored the event.

Other prizes provided by local shops included an Ardleigh gift voucher, Tony Gents Barbers voucher, The Plantique voucher and a Santa air walker balloon

from Pacific Balloons.

A school spokesman said: "2020 was a year of challenges, and communities pulled together to support and celebrate each other. So Ardleigh Green School's Parents Association decided to make its Christmas celebrations all about the community and get everyone out to enjoy the Christmas lights and decorations around the town and share the Christmas spirit."

Debbie Adshead, chairman of the school's Parents Association, said: "It's been well received and we're very pleased with it. We tried to involve the whole community. Although we couldn't do what we normally do at Christmas, we didn't want to do nothing."

Support is vital for London's Air Ambulance



People in Hornchurch and across London are being asked to support a fundraising appeal for London's Air Ambulance Charity.

Ann Tyrrell, from Hornchurch, has volunteered for the charity for a year and has stressed the importance of public support.

She said: "The impact of the pandemic has been quite significant on the charity and on that basis I do feel very sad. I was going to be doing several events, going out and raising awareness, and all of a sudden it was all stopped. If the pandemic loses the charity millions of pounds then they're not going to be able to continue flying. You never know when you might need them, and their teams bring the hospital to the patient. I can't wait to get back out there and support them however I can."

The appeal comes as the charity is estimating that it will lose £5million in income over the next two to three years owing to COVID-19 restrictions, the equivalent of 2,440 potentially life-saving missions.

To donate, go to londonsairambulance.org.uk



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JANUARY BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH: *Carnation*

If you were born in January, then your birth flower is the delicately scented and long-lasting carnation. Commonly gifted on Mother's Day, carnations are one of the easiest flower varieties to care for.

WHAT DOES A CARNATION SYMBOLISE?

Carnations come in many shades, and each colour has a different meaning:

- > **LIGHT RED** carnations symbolise admiration
- > **DARK RED** carnations represent deep love and affection
- > **WHITE** carnations are used to convey purity and luck
- > **PINK** carnations are used to show gratitude as well as to remember the deceased
- > **YELLOW** carnations convey disappointment and rejection
- > **PURPLE** carnations stand for unpredictability

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

If your birth flower is the carnation, you are said to be fiercely loyal and have unrivalled love for your family and friends. You are also strongly motivated and will work hard to gain a position of power in your career.

HOW CAN I GROW CARNATIONS?

Carnations are relatively easy to grow, although they do need between four and six hours of direct sunlight a day. For best results, plant in drained soil that is slightly alkaline and fertilise regularly. Tall varieties may need support to hold up their stems as they grow. You can grow carnations in flower beds or in containers such as pots.

DO CARNATIONS COME BACK YEAR AFTER YEAR?

Carnations come in annual, biennial and perennial types, so depending on the amount of space you have, you are guaranteed to be able to find a variety to fit your garden. Perennial carnation seeds should be planted in

late autumn to early spring and annual carnation seeds can be sown directly in the ground from April to May or in shelter from as early as March.





Horticulture Heroes:

There's nothing quite like learning building knowledge from the ground up, and for a young Ellie Harrison, the wildlife, ecology and wide-open spaces of Zimbabwe provided a fertile and expansive canvas on which to construct her career.

From kids' TV to wildlife programming and on to the BBC, stopping off along the way at the Chelsea Flower Show, the now-43-year-old's focus has always been in the embracing of the natural world, even in home surroundings.

"I'm not sure where the phrase 'wildlife gardening' came from, but it requires little explanation," says the presenter and broadcaster. "As much as I admire the ingenuity and craft so many of us invest in our green spaces at home, I sometimes feel it is a look that can be a bit too contrived and planned.

"Wildlife gardening is really about embracing living landscapes. It doesn't matter if you're talking about

a 100ft lawn or something as simple as a flower bed, the point is that our spaces have all the life and variety that nature and the countryside provide."

At the heart of it is having the right platforms for birds, bees and insects. That will stimulate the impact of genuine wildlife in an area that might be bereft of anything noticeable.

"It's a case of making natural and organic decisions to decorate your space. Instead of using a dull wooden fence, invest in a living boundary that can feature bamboo, twine, flowers, scent and berries."

Similarly, a pond can be used to harvest natural life such as newts, tadpoles, frogs, toads and insects, rather than fish imported in from the local pet shop.

"The exciting thing about wildlife gardening is the creation of a world that grows and evolves in front of you, and all by itself. The phrase 'how nature intended' never seemed so pertinent."

Photo credit: bbc.co.uk

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GUARD YOUR *garden*

Just as people need a helping hand to combat the seasonal selections of health afflictions, so too should we be aware of the pests and disease that threaten the green goodies in our gardens.

CABBAGE KILLERS

You wouldn't think the humble caterpillar would rate high in the list of garden gremlins, but the larvae of cabbage moth caterpillars can reap havoc in a bed of well-tended crops. A simple insect-proof mesh covering should keep most of them away.

THE SLUG BUG

Your average garden slug will happily eat away at any type of vegetable it finds, and whether leaves, shoots, fruits or stems, he's happy as long as he's feeding. Encouraging hedgehogs into your garden is a great way to get a classic slug predator to help you out.

THE CUCUMBER SLUMBER

Blossom end rot sounds a lot worse than it is... in fact, it's not even rot. More precisely, the blossom end of anything from aubergines to chillis, cucumbers to squash and melons, develops into a sunken rotten area. It comes as a result of irregular water supply, so is easily fixed.

FEAR THE APHID

A sticky residue that gradually turns into a sooty mould is a sure-fire sign that your plant has an aphid problem. Sometimes barely visible to the naked eye, aphids can cause stunted plant growth and curled-up leaves, but can be warded off by good garden hygiene and natural predators, such as ladybirds.

BLIGHT

A fungus that causes leaves to shrivel and brown patches to appear on fruits, this fungus-like organism loves damp environments, and there's little you can do to halt its rapid spread, other than remove affected plants and start again. Once more, maintaining good hygiene in your plot is the best way to ensure you don't have to deal with the problem in the first place.



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BUBBLE WRAP: Let's be honest, there are very few things those tech bods haven't tried to replicate in phone form, and the satisfaction of bubble wrap is the latest to come to the fore, with an effortless, screen-tappingly satisfying few minutes to be had by all.



UGLY CAMERA: As we're all so charismatic, intelligent, funny and, most importantly, good looking, it's good to see things from the other side from time to time, so why not install the Ugly Camera to layer a selection of slightly unusual filters over your otherwise gorgeous demeanour.

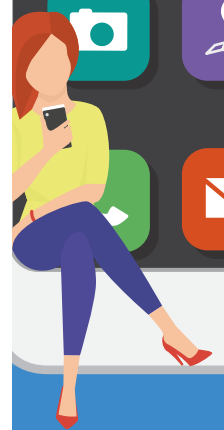
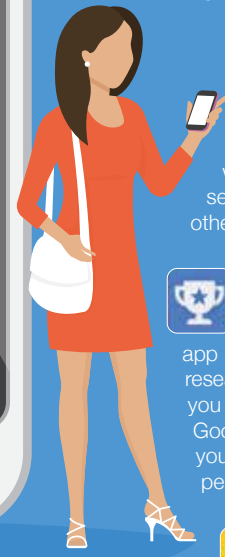


GOOGLE OPINION REWARDS: Another cool product from that little silicon valley start-up – this Android app periodically asks you questions regarding research projects, the answers to which earn you credits that can be redeemed in the Google Play Store. A decent way to increase your phone's capabilities without spending a penny.



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GERBILS

on film

THE MOST POPULAR PETS IN MOVIE HISTORY

TURNER AND HOCH

Clumsy, slobbering and probably quite smelly too, it's no wonder that Tom Hanks' detective character, Scott Turner, is reluctant to take on a canine as a companion. Played by Beasley the French Mastiff, Hooch becomes an integral part of Turner's criminal-catching team, winning over the cynical cop's heart in the process.

BABE

The eponymous piglet in one of the most beloved children's tales, Babe single-trotteredly transformed our perception of the humble hog. Proving to be as useful as his best friend Fly, the sheepherding collie, the sweet little piglet proves to have more heart, courage and kindness than any of his human counterparts. Oink oink.

SHADOWFAX

Though there were many weird and wondrous creatures in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, it is surely Shadowfax, Gandalf's trusty steed, who is the most desirable. A majestic and wild white beauty, Tolkien's creation refuses to be bridled, carrying only the wise old wizard on his back. He is surely the bravest bronco we would all love to have in our lives.

UGGIE

If silent French comedy *The Artist* was the unexpected hit of the 2011 film season, then surely Uggie, the flick's beloved Jack Russell, was its star. Rescued from a dog pound by animal trainer Omar Von Muller, the adorable and highly intelligent Uggie became an overnight sensation, winning the Palm Dog Award at the Cannes Film Festival. Though Uggie retired the following year and sadly passed away in 2015, his legacy will forever live on in this Oscar-winning masterpiece.

Photo credit: neralsandbeyond.com, imdb.com, youtube.com, canyon-news.com



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Dear Brett,

VISION magazine has been brilliant for us.

They've helped us increase brand awareness across the whole region and gained us a good few happy customers in the short time we've been with them.

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The PROPERTY Bug?

HOW COVID-19 HAS TRANSFORMED NOT JUST OUR LIVES, BUT THE PROPERTY MARKET TOO

While so much of our COVID-19 focus in 2020 was on health, employment and income, the pandemic's impact on the property market has been extreme, with further fluctuations due over the next few months as the industry reflects the variable conditions we find ourselves living under.

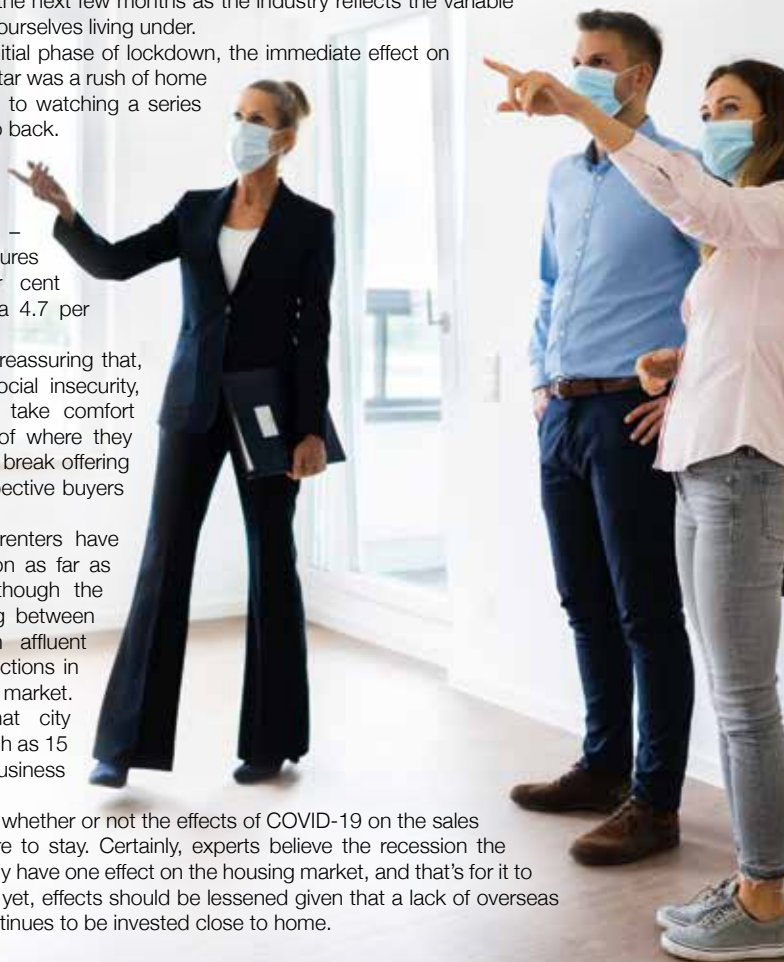
Certainly in the initial phase of lockdown, the immediate effect on our bricks and mortar was a rush of home improvements akin to watching a series of *DIY SOS* back to back.

Sure enough, the Land Registry – generally considered the best guide to house prices in the UK – published September figures that indicated a 1.7 per cent month-on-month rise and a 4.7 per cent increase year on year.

For many, then, it's been reassuring that, through a time of great social insecurity, homeowners can at least take comfort from the increasing value of where they reside, with the stamp duty break offering a further incentive for prospective buyers to go in with higher bids.

And at the same time, renters have enjoyed increased protection as far as tenancy conditions go, although the market finds itself diverging between an increase in rentals in affluent areas and fewer new instructions in the bottom portion of the market. Research also shows that city centre lets are down as much as 15 per cent as some urban business areas become ghost towns.

It all leaves us speculating whether or not the effects of COVID-19 on the sales and lettings market are here to stay. Certainly, experts believe the recession the economy is suffering can only have one effect on the housing market, and that's for it to follow suit into decline. And yet, effects should be lessened given that a lack of overseas travel means the pound continues to be invested close to home.



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THE RISE OF VOICE SEARCH

Did you know that 60 per cent of smartphone users have tried voice search at least once in the last 12 months, and 55 per cent of teenagers use this technology on a daily basis?

WHAT IS VOICE SEARCH?

Voice search is an innovative technology that allows internet users to perform a web search by verbally asking a question on their smartphone or smart device, rather than by typing it in to a search box.

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2. UPDATE YOUR GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LISTING

Most voice searches are local ones, so you need to make sure all your company contact information is up to date on both your website and your Google My Business listing.

3. OPTIMISE YOUR WEBSITE WITH LONG-TAIL KEYWORDS

When using a voice assistant, people talk as if they're speaking to a real person. This means asking full questions and using longer phrases than they would if they were typing a search into Google. Therefore, your website needs to be optimised with longer phrases, also known as long-tail keywords.

4. IMPROVE YOUR PAGE SPEED

A simple tip, the faster your webpage loading speed, the more likely you are to appear in voice search results. You can use Google PageSpeed Insights to check the speed of your site or you can do it manually. Google recommends a page loading time of less than two seconds.



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SPORT

A hero of the game, a villain to himself

The gap between hero and villain has perhaps never been better exemplified – in sporting terms, at least – than through the life of Diego Maradona.

When the Argentine departed us on November 25, football, sport and the world as a cultural sponge lost someone whose notoriety was as decorated as his talent.

In the space of four short minutes in the Estadio Azteca, in Mexico City, on June 22, 1986, Maradona showed the two sides of his character in the sort of perfect juxtaposition usually reserved for a Shakespeare play. The tragedy came first – that 'hand of God' moment that we all know, even if few of us, now, here in 2021, actually saw it happen live.

And then, the comedy, even if it was again England's footballers being derided, as a dancing, pirouetting, sauntering, bulldozing run through the Three Lions' defence rubbed salt in our wounds,

while offering up a perfect apology to that same deity for the forward's earlier misdemeanour.

When that higher force claimed the 60-year-old in November, football fans the world over began to ponder again the best ever – Puskás, Pelé, Ronaldo, Messi. Of course, Maradona would never enter into such debate.

He may have led an average Argentina side to World Cup glory in 1986, and an even flatter version of themselves to the final four years later. He may have performed miracles in guiding unfancied, unfashionable Napoli to Serie A success in Italy. And in later life as drugs, gangs, sex workers and other lurid temptations possessed a man whose only passion, really and truly, was to kick a ball, he may have lost sight entirely of those dusty, poverty-stricken streets in Buenos Aires where he grew up.

And yet, through it all he stayed true to himself: "I am black and white... I'll never be grey."

Photo credit: Carlo Fumagalli/AP/Shutterstock

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Remembering RAY

Bidding farewell to former Liverpool, Spurs and England keeper Ray Clemence

There's something unique about goalkeepers – they have spirit, longevity and a sense of bravery that far outweighs any other player on the pitch. It's also commonly known that they're rather daft... how else can you explain wanting to have footballs fired your way at more than 100mph?

And yet, Ray Clemence was as close to normal as you could get. The former England stopper, who passed away on November 15 at the age of 72, was a scholar of the game – his MBE for services to football bore evidence to that. In more than 1,000 career appearances, more than half of which were for Liverpool in a golden era for the club, he clinched five league titles, three European Cups, three UEFA Cups, two FA Cups and a host of other trophies.

He took his knowledge, guile, influence and experience to the next level with management and coaching projects – he oversaw Barnet as joint manager and tutored the keepers at Tottenham as part of the club's coaching staff.

Yet it was as the national team's goalkeeping coach under Glenn Hoddle, Kevin Keegan, Sven-Göran Eriksson, Steve McClaren and Roy Hodgson that he truly excelled, with multiple World Cup and European Championship campaigns.

Also employed as the FA's Head of Development, Clemence's involvement with the game continued right the way through to his death, and most recently he had been back working with Spurs.

An initial prostate cancer diagnosis arrived in 2005. He lived with that for 15 years, but finally succumbed to the illness in November. His passing was marked by a flood of tributes, as one of the greatest-ever England goalkeepers hung up his gloves for the final time.

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While we consider email a modern tool, it's startling to think this all happened 50 years ago. Indeed, one of the first people to send an email in the UK was the Queen, way back in 1976. It was only through the embracing of home computing in the 1980s and 1990s, and the adaption of technology that went with that, did email messaging come into the mainstream. As soon as it did, we were hooked, for life.

No more letters sluggishly sent through the post or sports journalists having to file match reports in a phone box; to fully appreciate what this technology has done for us, just consider the world without email.

These days there are almost four billion email accounts, with 300 billion messages sent every day. Ray passed away five years ago, but his legacy – and his emails – live on.



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That's where telematics insurance comes in. Using the technology found in a smartbox (actually just a small device that plugs in below your steering wheel), this clever piece of tech will measure how well you drive.

In other words, the days of having to pay premiums based on the 'average driver' are no more – what you pay is directly related to how safely you take corners, to how much you respect road conditions

and to how conscious you are of other road users. It especially factors in how far you drive over a period of time, as sensible logic suggests that the more miles a motorist clocks up the more likely they are to be involved in an accident.

When you apply for telematics insurance you'll have to provide information regarding where your car is parked, when in the day you usually drive, the types of roads you use and approximate annual mileage. All being well, you'll be rewarded with an initial monthly cost that's much lower than standard insurance.

You'll encounter few problems if you stick to your promise of driving safely and stay within your mileage quota.


However, be warned: from hard braking to speeding to driving too many miles, telematics insurance may well cost you more in the long run if you fail to keep your motoring promises.



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PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

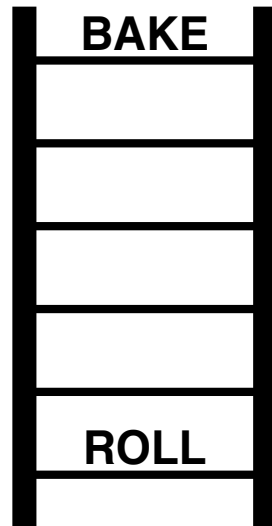
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- ▶ ST BERNARD

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DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Nepal's flag is the only flag in the world that doesn't have four sides
- ▶ Purple is the most uncommon colour to be used on flags
- ▶ The flag of Belize uses more colours than any other flag
- ▶ Hawaii's state flag contains the Union Jack. It is the only US state flag to include a foreign country's national flag
- ▶ There are 12 stars on the flag of Europe
- ▶ When the Queen goes to Parliament, the Royal Standard is flown from Victoria Tower
- ▶ Denmark has the oldest flag in the world, designed in 1219 and unchanged since
- ▶ South Sudan has the newest flag in the world
- ▶ The study of flags is called vexillology

WORD LADDER



THE AIM: Change the word at the top of the ladder one letter at a time to make the word at the bottom.

HOW TO: Change one letter on each step to make a new word. By the time you reach the end, you should have created the new word.

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

TIP: There is usually more than one way to solve this puzzle.



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